

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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O 191120Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5429

INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

USMISSION USUN

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 RABAT 2374

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR PFOR MO SP SS

SUBJECT: SPANISH SAHARA: ANALYSIS AND SUGGESTIONS

DEPT PLEASE PASS TO SECRETARY'S PARTY

FROM THE AMBASSADOR

REF: STATE 113002

1. SUMMARY: IF PRESENT TRENDS IN SAHARA DISPUTE ARE NOT REVERSED, OUTLOOK IS FOR CONTINUING GUERRILLA ACTIVITY, WITH EVER-PRESENT RISK THAT SITUATION MAY GET OUT OF HAND. WE NEED TO GAIN TIME THROUGH COOLING OF DISPUTE, ESPECIALLY GIVEN DELICACY OF SPANISH BASE NEGOTIATIONS. IN ABSENCE OF DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY TOWARD RESOLUTION OF SAHARA DISPUTE, OUR COUNSELS OF RESTRAINT ARE BOUND TO HAVE DIMINISHING IMPACT ON MOROCCO. WE SHOULD THEREFORE CONSIDER WHETHER THERE ARE MORE EFFECTIVE WAYS TO ACHIEVE OUR AIM, FOR EXAMPLE BY ENCOURAGING START OF AT LEAST A SEMBLANCE OF A NEGOTIATING PROCESS. END SUMMARY.

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2. I APPRECIATE BALANCE AND WELL-DEFINED FOCUS OF INSTRUCTIONS CONTAINED REFTEL. MY MEETING WITH FONMIN LARKI, WHO COMMUTING BETWEEN RABAT AND KING IN FES, IS NOW SCHEDULED FOR TUESDAY, MAY 20.

3. IT MAY BE USEFUL AT THIS JUNCTURE TO OFFER A FRESH ANALYTICAL VIEW AND SUGGESTIONS FOR U.S. POLICY ON SAHARA FROM OUR VANTAGE POINT. SAHARA WILL ALMOST SURELY BE ONE OF TOPICS RAISED IN MADRID DURING PRESIDENT'S FORTHCOMING VISIT THERE. IN ADDITION, CURRENT UPSURGE OF GUERRILLA ACTIVITY IN SAHARA HIGHLIGHTS INCREASED VOLATILITY OF SITUATION. WE WILL NEED TO MONITOR CLOSELY POTENTIAL OF SAHARA DISPUTE TO DCECT U.S. INTERESTS IN BOTH SPAIN AND MOROCCO. I RECOGNIZE THAT USG SHOULD AVOID POSITIONS ON SAHARA WHICH WOULD JEOPARDIZE PRESENT CRITICAL SPANISH BASE NGTOTIATIONS. AT SAME TIME, MOROCCO'S IMPORTANCE TO U.S. BOTH IN MIDDLE EAST CONTEXT AND WITH RESPECT TO BILATERAL RELATIONS NECESSITATES CAREFUL BALANCING IN U.S. APPROACH.

4. AS TO MOROCCAN PERSPECTIVE ON ISSUE, KING HASSAN BELIEVES THAT TIME AND POLITICAL EVOLUTION IN SPAIN ARE ON HIS SIDE. HE IS, HOWEVER, BUFFETED BY CONFLICTING IMPERATIVES. ON ONE HAND, HE UNDERSTANDS THAT OUTBREAK OF FIGHTING WITH SPAIN WOULD BE HIGHLY DANGEROUS, AND IN ANY CASE PREFERS COMING TO AN AMICABLE DEAL WITH MADRID. FIGHTING WOULD ALSO BE INCONGRUOUS WITH HIS PROFESSED CONVICTION THAT SPANISH DEPARTURE FROM SAHARA IS INEVITABLE AND THAT CLOSE AND BENEFICIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN SPAIN AND MOROCCO CAN ONLY BE INTENSIFIED AFTER A FRIENDLY SPANISH DEPARTURE. ON OTHER HAND, HIGH DEGREE OF NATIONAL UNITY KING HAS MUSTERED BEHIND HIS SAHARA POLICY CANNOT BE SUSTAINED AND COULD WELL DISINTEGRATE IF, BY MOROCCAN STANDARDS, REASONABLE AND RELATIVELY STEADY MOMENTUM TOWARD SATISFACTORY SOLUTION IS NOT ATTAINED. FURTHERMORE, KING NO DOUBT PERCEIVES NEED FOR SOME CONTINUING GUERRILLA ACTIVITY IN SUPPORT OF MOROCCAN POLITICAL AIMS, INASMUCH AS MOROCCO CANNOT VERY WELL LEAVE THIS FIELD TO ALGERIAN-SUPPORTED AND OTHER NON-MOROCCAN INSPIRED GROUPS ALONE. IN ABSENCE OF SEMBLANCE

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OF NEGOTIATING PROCESS, WE MUST EXPECT SPORADIC WAVES OF "INCIDENTS" AND FURTHER INFLAMMATORY ORATORY, WITH EVER-PRESENT RISK THAT THINGS COULD GET OUT OF HAND.

5. WHILE I OF COURSE DEFER ON SPANISH ASPECTS TO EMBASSY MADRID, ITS DETAILED AND FULL REPORTING CONVEYS IMPRESSION, ALSO REFLECTED BY SPANISH DIPLOMATS IN RABAT, THAT THERE MUST BE IN SPAIN A SUBSTANTIAL BODY OF OPINION

FAVORING AN ATTEMPT TO WORK OUT AN ADVANTAGEOUS ARRANGEMENT WITH MOROCCO, ALTHOUGH FRANCO'E INTRANSIGENCE AND IMMOBILITY APPARENTLY REMAIN MAJOR OBSTACLE TO MOVEMENT IN THIS DIRECTION. SPANISH POLICY, AS EMBASSY MADRID POINTS OUT, CONTINUES TO ENTAIL CLOSE FORMAL ADHERENCE TO UN PRESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEMPLATION OF EXERCISE OF SELF-DETERMINATION IN SAHARA. (SPAIN'S GOING AHEAD WITH A REFERENDUM IN FORESEEABLE FUTURE WOULD, HOWEVER, ALMOST CERTAINLY DESTABILIZE THE REGION, A DANGER PRESUMABLY RECOGNIZED BY MADRID POLICY-MAKERS.) SPANIARDS ALSO APPEAR HEARTENED BY MOROCCAN-ALGERIAN DISHARMONY OVER SAHARA, AND GOS CONTINUES TO GIVE MOROCCANS FEELING OF RIGID SPANISH OPPOSITION TO DIALOGUE. THUS, IN PRACTICE, MANEUVERING FOR TIME SEEMS MADRID'S PRIMARY TACTICAL PURPOSE, AT LEAST AS SEEN FROM HERE.

6. THE DIFFERING IMPERATIVES OF USG, GOS, AND GOM NEVERTHELESS PROVIDE SOME CONVERGENCE OF INTERESTS FROM WHICH A MUTUALLY ADVANTAGEOUS APPROACH CAN PERHAPS BE DEvised. IN SUM, THE FOLLOWING OPTIMAL DESIDERATA OBTAIN IN MY OPINION:

A. USG AND GOS FOR VARIETY OF REASONS REQUIRE A COOLING OF THE ISSUE IN ORDER TO BUY SOME TIME.

B. GOM NEEDS ENOUGH APPEARANCE OF PROGRESS TO BE ABLE TO REMAIN ON POLITICAL TRACK AND SATISFY DEMANDS OF INTERNAL POLITICS.

C. A RELATIVELY MODEST ROLE FOR USG IS DESIRABLE SO AS NOT TO OVERBURDEN SPANISH BASE NEGOTIATIONS AND PRESENTLY FAVORABLE U.S. RELATIONS WITH BOTH SPAIN AND MOROCCO.

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7. CERTAIN SUPPLEMENTARY CAVEATS ARE IN ORDER. WE CAN, OF COURSE, CONTINUE PERIODICALLY TO COUNSEL KING ON WISDOM OF RESTRAINT, AS I HAVE BEEN INSTRUCTED TO DO BY REFTEL. IN PAST, SUCH DEMARCHES HAVE NO DOUBT HAD A CONSTRUCTIVE IMPACT ON GOM, AS WELL AS IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOS. IN SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED, HOWEVER, THAT IT WOULD BE FAR MORE EFFECTIVE TO COUNSEL PRUDENCE IF A CRNEGOTIATING PROCESS--HOWEVER TENTATIVE OR EVEN DIFFICULT--WERE ACTUALLY UNDERWAY, THAN TO ADVOCATE INACTION IN ABSENCE OF SUCH A PROCESS. REPEATED CAUTIONARY ADVICE TO GOM IN FACE OF PERSISTENT GOS IMMOBILITY CAN BE EXPECTED TO RECEIVE DIMINISHING HEED HERE. WE SHOULD, IN MY VIEW, THEREFORE CONSIDER OTHER WAYS TO GAIN THE TIME WE NEED AND TO PRESERVE STABILITY OF REGION.

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED SECRETARY'S PARTY.

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5430

INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

USMISSION USUN

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8. ALSO, QUESTION WHETHER U.S. SHOULD SUPPORT INDEPENDENCE FOR THE TERRITORY OFTEN ARISES. AT FIRST GLANCE, THIS WOULD APPEAR AN ATTRACTIVE POLICY. IT IS LEGALLY SOUND, IN LINE WITH UN RESOLUTIONS AND DECOLONIZATION RHETORIC, AND WOULD GET EVERYBODY BUT MOROCCO OFF THE HOOK. DEEPER EXAMINATION, I BELIEVE, SHOWS OTHERWISE, HOWEVER. IF SAHARAN INDEPENDENCE WERE TO BE ONLY A DISGUISED VARIATION OF SPANISH RULE, IT WOULD DECEIVE NO ONE, BUT INSTEAD SHARPEN DECOLONIZATION ISSUE AND RESULT IN PROLONGING OF DISPUTE, PROBABLY WITH HEIGHTENED INTENSITY. IF INDEPENDENCE WERE REAL (LEAVING ASIDE QUESTION OF SAHARANS' ABILITY TO GOVERN THEMSELVES), IT WOULD, IN MY VIEW, NOT LAST VERY LONG. FOR ONE THING, MOROCCANS ARE CONVINCED THAT ALGERIA HAS DIRECT AND INDIRECT DESIGNS ON SAHARA. THIS PERCEPTION HAS JELLED FURTHER RECENTLY FOLLOWING MANIFESTATIONS OF ALGERIAN HOSTILITY TOWARD MOROCCO ON SAHARA ISSUE IN ARAB LEAGUE MEETING IN CAIRO LAST MONTH AND IN PRESENT ICJ PROCEEDINGS. IT SEEMS VIRTUALLY CERTAIN THAT IF SAHARA WERE PROCLAIMED INDEPENDENT, MOROCCANS WOULD UNDERTAKE IMMEDIATE OPEN OR THINLY DISGUISED ARMED ACTION TO UNDERMINE THIS STATUS. NO PERSUASION WOULD BE LIKELY TO DETER THEM. DESTABILIZING

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CONSEQUENCES FOR REGION CAN READILY BE IMAGINED.

9. IN LIGHT OF ABOVE CONSIDERATIONSVL STHE MORE FEASIBLE
SHORT-TERM, TACTICAL OPTIONS OPEN AT THIS STAGE APPEAR
TO BE THE FOLLOWING:

A. DELAY OF ICJ ADVISORY OPINION AND OF UN MOVES. OUR
PURPOSES WOULD BE WELL SERVED IF WE COULD SUBTLY CONVINCE
BOTH SPAIN AND MOROCCO OF THE WISDOM OF LETTING ICJ AND
UN PROCESSES WORK THEMSELVES OUT IN A LEISURELY FASHION,
PREFERABLY WITH DEFERRAL OF ANY SERIOUS UN DECISIONS
UNTIL 1976 GENERAL ASSEMBLY. BY THEN, MATTERS MAY HAVE
EVOLVED CONSIDERABLY FOR U.S. INTERESTS IN SPAIN. THE
SWEETENER FOR GOM WOULD BE SPANISH POSTPONEMENT OF ANY
SAHARAN REFERENDUM SINE DIE. THIS OPTION HAS THE
ATTRACTION OF BEING RELATIVELY EASY TO PURSUE WITH
SPAIN. IMPLEMENTATION, WITH SPAIN AND MOROCCO IN FAVOR,
WOULD PRESUMABLY BE LARGELY TECHNICAL. (LEGAL AND UN
EXPERTS ARE, OF COURSE, IN BETTER POSITION TO JUDGE HOW
DIFFICULT IT WOULD BE TO REALIZE SUCH A DELAY IN ICJ AND
UN FORUMS.) SERIOUS DRAWBACK, HOWEVER, IS THAT IT
UNLIKELY TO GO FAR ENOUGH, FAST ENOUGH TO SUIT MOROCCANS.
IF THEY DID AGREE, THE DELAY MIGHT NOT COMPLETELY AVERT
FURTHER FRICTION AND INCIDENTS, BUT IT WOULD HELP.

B. ENCOURAGE START OF NEGOTIATING PROCESS. WE MIGHT
ALSO CONSIDER THE MORE AMBITIOUS OPTION OF TRYING TO
PERSUADE GOS (PERHAPS THROUGH THIRD PARTY) THAT COMMENCEMENT
OF SOME SORT OF NEGOTIATING PROCESS WITH MOROCCO COULD
BE A MORE EFFECTIVE TIME-GAINING PLOY THAN SIMPLY
STANDING PAT. AT OUTSET, SUCH A NEGOTIATING PROCESS
WOULD BE MORE IMPORTANT FOR APPEARANCES THAN ACTUAL
CONTENT, AND COULD INITIALLY INVOLVE NOTHING MORE THAN
TAKING SOUNDINGS. AT SOME POINT, THERE WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY
BE PRESSURES TO DEAL WITH SUBSTANCE, BUT WITH INGENUITY
THE PROCESS COULD BE SPUN OUT. SUBSTANTIVE PROBINGS MIGHT
EVEN BE OF INTEREST TO SPAIN, AS KING HAS OF COURSE
INDICATED THAT MOROCCO WOULD BE GENEROUS TO GOS WITH
ECONOMIC AND MILITARY CONCESSIONS, A GENEROSITY WHICH
WILL INEVITABLY BE TAXED BY OVERLY TOUGH SPANISH
STANCE. IN ANY CASE, EVEN REAL NEGOTIATIONS WOULD

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PROBABLY PROVE DIFFICULT AND NECESSARILY BE DRAWN OUT.

OF ITSELF, COMMENCEMENT OF A PROCESS WOULD, IN MY VIEW, CONSTITUTE THE MINIMAL SHOW OF PROGRESS NEEDED BY THE KING AT THIS POINT AND BE ADEQUATE TO ALLAY INTERNAL PRESSURES ON HIM FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD.

C. MULTILATERAL PROCESS. A VARIATION ON OPTION "B" COULD INVOLVE SPANISH CONTACTS WITHIN A MULTILATERAL FRAMEWORK, INCLUDING ALSO ALGERIA AND POSSIBLY MAURITANIA. THIS MAY BE MORE THEORETICAL THAN PRACTICAL AS A TACTICAL, TIME-GAINING DEVICE. WHILE A BROADER FRAMEWORK MIGHT APPEAL TO SPAIN BECAUSE OF POSSIBILITIES FOR PLAYING OFF THE ARABS AGAINST ONE ANOTHER, IT WOULD BE MUCH LESS EFFECTIVE THAN BILATERAL CONTACTS IN INDUCING MOROCCAN MODERATION, IN VIEW OF MOROCCAN SUSPICIONS OF ALGERIA. POSITIVE RESULTS WOULD SEEM ATTAINABLE ONLY IN UNLIKELY EVENT SPAIN COULD BE PERSUADED TO ENCOURAGE MOROCCAN-ALGERIAN ACCOMMODATION. SUCH AN EFFORT MIGHT AIM AT A "PACKAGE" ENCOMPASSING MOROCCAN RATIFICATION OF LONG-PENDING BORDER AGREEMENT WITH ALGERIA AND ALGERIAN AND SPANISH ACQUIESCENCE IN "ARRANGEMENT" ON SAHARA WHICH WOULD BE SATISFACTORY TO MOROCCANS (AND MAURITANIANS) AND ABOVE ALL NOT INVOLVE FORMAL REFERENDUM.

10. U.S. ROLE. A. OUR SAHARA INITIATIVES AND PARTICIPATION IN THEIR IMPLEMENTATION SHOULD PROBABLY BE KEPT AS MODEST AND INCONSPICUOUS AS POSSIBLE GIVEN THE PRIORITY OF SPANISH BASE NEGOTIATIONS. WHILE AT PRESENT US-SPANISH RELATIONS ARE OBJECTIVELY MORE IMPORTANT TO THE U.S. THAN ARE US-MOROCCAN RELATIONS, AT LEAST IN THEORY FUTURE EVOLUTION IN SPAIN MIGHT DIMINISH U.S. POSITION THERE. EQUALLY THEORETICALLY, THE SAME CANNOT BE RULED OUT IN MOROCCO EITHER. HENCE IT IS IMPORTANT TO U.S. INTERESTS THAT WE CONSERVE BEST POSSIBLE ASSETS ON BOTH SIDES OF STRAIT OF GIBRALTAR.

B. IF MORE PROMINENT U.S. ROLE BECOMES DESIRABLE, WE COULD ADD FURTHER DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY SUCH AS TRYING TO PERSUADE GOM TO SEPARATE SAHARA EXPLICITLY FROM NORTHERN ENCLAVES ISSUE, LETTING LATTER FALL UNDER TABLE FOR TIME BEING. SAHARA CLEARLY TAKES PRECEDENCE OVER ENCLAVES

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IN MOROCCAN THINKING, WHILE OPPOSITE APPEARS TO BE CASE IN SPAIN. SEPARATION OF THESE ISSUES THUS HAS SOME PROMISE, ALTHOUGH IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO ADVANCE A PROPOSAL ALONG THESE LINES TO GOM IN ABSENCE OF MINIMAL "EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS" OUTLINED ABOVE. AGAIN, PROPOSAL NEED NOT NECESSARILY COME FROM USG IF OTHER SUITABLE THIRD PARTY COULD BE FOUND.

11. SAHARA DISPUTE IS, OF COURSE EXTREMELY COMPLEX

AND WE MUST CONSIDER WIDE RANGE OF POLITICAL, MILITARY
AND ECONOMIC FACTORS IN DETERMINING OUR POLICY. VAST
SAHARAN PHOSPHATE
RESERVES, FOR EXAMPLE, ARE BOUND TO
WEIGH HEAVILY IN LONGER RANGE EVALUATIONS. AS NOTED
IN OUR ANNUAL U.S. POLICY ASSESSMENT FOR MOROCCO (RABAT
A-44, APRIL 14), I BELIEVE IT WOULD BE WELL TO START
THINKING SYSTEMATICALLY NOW--BEYOND IMMEDIATE TACTICS
TOWARD THE LONGER HAUL--ABOUT WAYS IN WHICH WE MIGHT BE
ABLE TO ARRIVE AT AN ULTIMATE SAHARA SOLUTION IN
HARMONY WITH OUR INTERESTS.
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